Quick Strokes

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An appeal to good hearts from a brave and resilient couple

Robert Parkinson is an outpatient at the Livingston Medical Clinic, San Diego, undergoing treatment to stimulate his immune system. He suffers from cancer of the tongue. Chemotherapy is not indicated in his case, because of a congenital blood disorder, Fanconi's anemia. The clinic is operated by Dr. Virginia Livingston-Wheeler, a well-known research immunologist.

This news is contained in an appeal for donations to meet the medical expenses, which have already exhausted all the resources of the Parkinson family. Parkinson asks that contributions be sent to his wife, Marie, at 664 Gail Ave., No. B-22, Sunnyvale, California 94086.

Parkinson has been on medical disability from Control Data Corporation for more than two years. The diagnosis of cancer is recent. "The company has been very good to me," Parkinson writes. The CDC insurance plan does not, however, cover the cost of the treatment — vitamins and dietary supplements — which, his doctors agree, is the only course it can take.

Bob Parkinson equipped himself with a Dvorak-keyboard typewriter in 1962 and has used his writing, speaking, and planning skills to excellent effect in promoting the better arrangement. Since the onset of the decline in his health, his participation has been much missed.

Down under and up front— timely product planning by Australian computer maker

Allance Digital Corporation Pty. Limited, located in North Sydney, New South Wales, announces that their new word processor terminals should be coming off the line by the end of 1980. They will offer a Dvorak variant plug-in keyboard as well as a conventional one.

The Alliance arrangement differs from both the Oregon Alternate arrangement (see the Smith-Corona ad in this issue) and the final draft proposal to be referred by the X4DSK working group to American National Standards Committee X3-X4. Instead of occupying the mnemonic, touchtypable location at the right end of the home row, next to s, the hyphen is assigned to the digit row, perhaps on the theory that because the hyphen is also a minus sign, it should be close to the numbers.

With the solidus (slash, or shilling mark) paired with the **pounds** symbol, and with the question mark in the lower-case shift condition and on the left side, the Alliance variant recalls some of the small advantages of the classic Dvorak arrangement, which in aggregate were perhaps significant.

Another company, Agency 2000, which is associated with Alliance, assists in the marketing and also provides operator training. "Agency 2000 people are very keen on the Dvorak layout and will be actively participating in Ronald Watson's international competition," according to R. J. Stevens, director of group sales for Alliance. "We are also producing a standard dumb type VDU. It will have an optional Dvorak plug-in keyboard."

Portland Community College kit for Dvorak keyboard learning is forthcoming

Dvorak Keyboarding, A Retraining Program is the title for the learner's kit which has been in preparation for many months and has had some word-of-mouth advertising already under the nickname of the Sue George tapes. Mr. Donald M. Johnson, program manager for the Department of Business and Office Administration at Portland Community College, assures us that Sue is now devoting all her spare time to the completion of the Dvorak materials.

Until the Thanksgiving holiday, she had been working nonstop on other Portland Community College training materials that had to be given top priority. "Our intent," says Johnson, "is to place on the market a complete and thoroughly professional product."

We understand that the kit includes printed exercises and directions as well as voice tapes. The PCC address, 12000 S.W. 49th Ave., Portland, OR 97219.

Standard status for Dvorak variants is considered close and certain

The magazine to watch, if you want to see what the next American National standard for alphanumeric keyboards will look like, is **Standards Action.** Published by the American National Standards Institute, 1430 Broadway, New York, NY, it is available by subscription. Before a proposed standard is published as an AN standard, it is circulated for a 90-day comment period, and SA is the medium.

ANSI does not publish two standards for one item if they conflict. Sometimes, however, more than one variant for the same item may be published under one title, and a standard of this description is what we may expect for the revision of the withdrawn keyboard standards numbered X4.7 and X4.14.

Two subcommittees of the X3-X4 American National Standards committee have been at work on the revision— one called X4A12 and another called Working Group X4DSK. Work on the X4A12 portion of the standard, concerning arrangements with q and w side by side, was completed early in 1980. As we write, X4DSK is conducting its final ballot on a draft proposal for the part that concerns Dvorak variants. Two committees that outrank X4DSK will have to approve the standard before it is circulated for comment, but approval at those levels is not regarded as a problem.

Salutojn el Nederlando

"Thanks again for Quick Strokes. I have today arranged payment by International Money Order of $10 for 1980 and 1981. Keep up the good work!

"Lawrence Mee, P. O. Box 25041, 3001 HA Rotterdam, The Netherlands."

Subscriber Mee is director of Esperanto Lingvo Internacia.

International federation holds successful second annual meeting

With a very full agenda, the Dvorak International Federation met in Portland, Oregon, recently to prepare for further expansion. Delegations were in attendance from California, Washington, and Vermont, and greetings were read from other states and abroad.

Among the topics dealt with were the following: legislation to mandate the alternative keyboard in public agencies, funding for a part-time staff, new thoughts on quicker transition from conventional keying, announcements of new equipment with the new arrangement, the International Keyboard Productivity contest, new steps in publishing and publicity, economic opportunities, participation in and sponsorship of seminars and conferences, prospects for standardization.

Steve Anderson, attorney, of Salem, Oregon, is president of DIF. The DIF address, 468 State Street, Salem, OR 97301.

Thurman Clark, assistant state director of the Oregon Public Employes Retirement System, chairs a nominating committee.

"The "miniconvention" took place in a conference room at the Portland Coliseum on December 13.

Three new scholarly papers from Japan

The Department of Information Science, Faculty of Science, University of Tokyo, 7-3-1 Hongo, Bunkyo-Ku Tokyo, 113 Japan, has published, in English, three new scholarly papers on alphanumeric keyboard input.

The most directly interesting to Quick Strokes readers is Technical Report 80-11, "An Analysis of the Standard English Keyboard," by Yuzuru Hiraga, Yoshihiko Ono, and Yamada-Hisao. Experimental data are drawn from the performance of one operator (Japanese, female), who is not a translator but a coypist from English-language texts. Samples of her errors are consistent with an uncomfortably rapid pace.

Digraphs — two-stroke sequences — are of most interest to these investigators, because the scheme for efficient touch typing in Japanese involves two strokes to impress one character, usually representing a syllable. From this analysis, it appears that the qwerty model is to be severely shunned; too few instances of successive strokes with opposite hands in the home row occur in qwerty keying for it to be of any applicability to writing in syllables.

In further investigation, it would be well to apply August Dvorak's finger numbering system — in toward-the-thumb order, the one, two, three, and fore fingers. They have natural predilections about the order in which they tap, and adjacency is not the only clue to these.

TR 80-12 is "An Assignment of Key-codes for a Japanese Character Keyboard," by Yuzuru Hirago, Yoshihiko Ono, and Yamada-Hisao. TR-14 is "A Coding System of Chinese Characters for Touch Typing (a Summary Version)," by Jan Jinn-Ke and Yamada-Hisao.

Quick Strokes counsels against using the observation that the inventors of the 1873 typewriter arranged the characters as they did so as to slow the operation down and thus cut down on type bar collisions. The histories do not quote any source material that says this was the case. More likely, C. L. Sholes's consultant adumbrated nine-finger typing and also wanted to get away from the obvious drawback of alphabetical order.

Etherton and Boyd shatter the Sholes shackles

In an article in 80 Microcomputing for December, 1980, pages 66 to 80, two subscribers to Quick Strokes reveal a method for relegating to storage the cumbersome q, w, e, r, t, y arrangement of characters on TRS 80 keyboards and installing instead the far better — easier, faster, less stressful — Dvorak arrangement.

Jon Etherton, of Spokane, Washington, and Waldo T. Boyd, of Geyserville, California have spelled out in specific detail the method, which makes either arrangement accessible at the depression of two keys together.

Because the programmer and the operator of a home computer are usually the same person, applications of the Etherton program will probably give rise to many variants. The one that is shown in a diagram with the article is the classic Dvorak, with all the punctuation except hyphen assigned to the left side and with all of it except colon and semicolon assigned to the lower-case shift condition.

The authors suggest practice on the operator's own material as a method for learning and give a few rather telling examples of the contrast between the two arrangements in ease of operation. Quick Strokes, Box 643, West Sacramento, CA 95691, carries Dvorak, Simplified Keyboard Supplement, in stock at $2.50 a copy, postage prepaid. Its diagrams and exercises correspond to the diagram in "The Dvorak Keyboard", which is the title of the Etherton-Boyd article. For the sake of the higher speeds at which good accuracy prevails, the learner should drill at higher speeds than he is really capable of, on the exercises in the Supplement and on practice matter of his own selection.

There must be many people with access to a TRS-80 for whom text input is the main consideration, and for them it may be worth while to enroll in a school. Few schools will turn away a student who provides his own Dvorak-arranged machine and a starting manual such as the Supplement.

Concept for a 1981 bill for an act of the Oregon state legislature

Current ORS Specifications: ORS 279.729, "Establishing and enforcing specifications . . .," provides that the Department of General Services may establish and enforce standards for equipment in common use by state agencies and provides that the department "shall prescribe standards . . ." for paper use so that recycled paper will be used.

State standards for typing keyboards have not distinguished between the old traditional keyboard (also known as qwerty) currently in wide use throughout the state agencies and the Oregon Dvorak Simplified Keyboard to which several state agencies have now converted.

Concept of Proposal: Convert all keyboards in use by state agencies to Dvorak over a two-and-one-half-year period.

Statement of Need: (1) The conversion of Oregon state government to Dvorak will result in an efficiency increase of 50% to 100%. This has been amply illustrated by several studies performed in the past. Also, the Public Employes Retirement System which has been converted to Dvorak since October, 1977, has records which indicate that, at the end of November, 1979, their average production efficiency increase was 67%. This is unadjusted for turnover which required retraining of new employes. Such adjustment would provide an even larger increase.

(2) A very conservative estimate of savings to the taxpayers when all of state government in Oregon is converted is $20,000,000 per year.

(3) When the more than 20,000 state employes who type convert to Dvorak, the schools will begin teaching Dvorak as a standard typing method. Since Dvorak requires less than half the time to learn, this will free valuable class time and space as well as equipment.

(4) As most of the schools begin teaching Dvorak, the private sector will escalate conversion. This will result in lower costs for products and services.

(5) Retraining for employes is simple and requires little time but creates job satisfaction through a reduction in errors and fatigue.

Proposed Change: Amend ORS 279.729 to add a requirement that General Services establish as the standard for typing equip-

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Replies from state vocational education divisions

"I have known about Dvorak and his work since 1941. I continue to read with interest articles which indicate that DSK and ASK is still active in businesses. It is very seldom, however, that I find any business educator or typing teacher who has a similar positive feeling towards DSK or ASK.

"Copies of your materials have been sent to teacher educators at Plymouth State College and New Hampshire College, New Hampshire Vocational-Technical College of Nashua; secondary schools in Manchester, Nashua, Portsmouth; and the Cheshire Vocational Center in Keene."—Donald H. Peterson, consultant, office occupations, State of New Hampshire Department of Education.

"Thank you for sending the literature about the DSK system. "We have included an article in our Wordz O' Wizdom Newsletter which is sent to each Business Education department in Idaho. The article instructs interested teachers to write to your address for further information.

"The statistics citing improved typing speed and accuracy are impressive. I would like to receive copies of your research studies comparing the Qwerty and simplified keyboards."—Dan Petersen, State Supervisor, Office Occupations, Idaho State Board for Vocational Education.

Alternative buying in Australasia—summary as of November, 1980

The Australian federal Department of Productivity is organizing lectures and demonstrations around the better arrangement of characters on keyboards. The New South Wales Health Commission have a word-processing unit with the new keyboard, and the Attorney General and Justice Departments have purchased "a batch" of typewriters with it.

Qube Management Group recently took delivery of a word-processing unit with the feature of arrangement-to-arrangement switching. A company called CSR and another, the Qantas air lines, both have plans for a pilot project on retraining keyboard operators.

Charge Card Services trained six operators on the alternative board two years ago, and their operators are not at all inclined to revert to the old arrangement.

The above is from an interview with Ronald Watson which appears in the November, 1980, issue of Australasian Office News, page 90, illustrated with a good, clear photo of a Smith-Corona typewriter with the ASK variant of the Dvorak arrangement. The applications in state government in Oregon are mentioned, as are the instructional kits which have been in preparation, one kit by Portland Community College and the other by Robert Morton Associates, of Chicago.

"THE DVORAK SIMPLIFIED KEYBOARD: 40 Years of Frustration": 8-page, stapled author's reprint of **Computers and Automation** article. Written after invitation by Ralph Nader to speak on DSK. Very interesting text and illustrations. $2 p pd. Bob Parkingson, 3050 Rue d'Orleans, San Diego, CA 92110.

ASK SCM's—some in stock can ship pronto. 10% discount for cash with order only. ASK US for info. Belmont Adams, 4 Park Ave., Scarborough, ME 04074.

Bibliographic notes

Financial Review (Sydney, NSW, Australia), July 23, 1979, p 24, "The man who designed a new keyboard," by Ken McGregor. Interview with R. Watson, emphasizing home-row concentration.

Sydney **Morning Herald,** Sept. 15, 1979, p 1, "Column 8", quotes Watson on proneness to error on the conventional arrangement — "The most mistyped word is **the.**"

Sydney **Morning Herald,** Monday, July 4, 1977, "Typing 'made easy' by radical new keyboard," by Ken McGregor. Quotes Maurice Harris and R. Watson, "With such a demand for increased productivity, people will at least listen to us." Diagram.

The Sun (date?), "Fair with a flair for the unusual," by Robert Bowden. Business Efficiency Fair 78 at the National Mutual Centre. "The American Simplified Keyboard typewriter is claimed to increase typing speed to between 70 and 130 words a minute."

Financial Review, Oct. 17, 1978, p 27, "Word processing trend to cheaper screen systems." Watson on panel at seminars in Sydney.

Modern office & data management (Rydge Publications, Sydney, NSW), February, 1978, pp 35, 37, 38, "The Simplified keyboard," by Ronald Watson, "with the higher speeds possible, one does not need to learn shorthand."

Modern office administration (Rydge), August, 1971, p 41, "Simplified keyboard boosts typing output 35 per cent." Good photo of ASK-arranged keyboard.

Human Environment (Mt. Green Publishing Co., Crows Nest, NSW), June, 1971, pp 26, 27, "The Dvorak Simplified Keyboard," by Ronald Watson. With diagram. Quotes Frank Gilbreth, "Fitting machines to people is an easier, cheaper, and more profitable idea than fitting people to machines."

Concept . . .

Continued from PAGE TWO

ment the Oregon Dvorak Simplified Keyboard as currently in use by several state agencies and that all typing devices be converted by December 31, 1985.

Desirability of Change: Among informed people, very high.

Assessment of Legislative Acceptance: At the present very few legislators are aware of the choice. None of them have been completely informed regarding the origins and characteristics of the two keyboards.

With a one-hour presentation the legislators will be about 90% receptive, based on past experience. The acceptance should be high. This is especially true in the current tax-cutting atmosphere.

FOR RENT—One-inch videotape, "Typewriters: Dvorak Made a Better One", narrated by Albert C. Kolb, Carmel (California) Middle School, time 14 minutes and 19 seconds. Narrator and secretary demonstrate an interesting and innovative alternative to the standard keyboard. Motivates student interest in the typewriter and in developing skills. Per week, $5. Shipping weight 1 lb. 12 oz. Quick Strokes, Box 643, West Sacramento, CA 95691.

DVORAK CONVERSION program for Radio Shack TRS-80 Level II Microsoft Basic. Relocatable program runs in 183 bytes memory. Program tape and Basic listing $10. Information $2. Jon Etherton, 1927 W. Riverside, Spokane, WA 99201. (509) 624-8474.

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